GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:182
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2005
HIKE IN RURAL TELEPHONE RATES
Chouhan Shri Shivraj Singh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone rates and security charges in the rural areas are now at a par with the urban areas due to recent hike in the telephone tariff;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to reconsider the proposals and reduce the registration fees, telephone call charges and telephone rent in rural areas in the country and restore the earlier position in this regard;

(c) if so, the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to bring improvement in telephone services in the rural areas of the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 182 FOR 16TH MARCH, 2005 REGARDING HIKE IN RURAL TELEPHONE RATES.

(a) No, Sir. So far as the telephone rates for rural areas are concerned, rental are lower and free calls are higher than urban areas. Security deposit for new connections has now been simplified with effect from 17.5.2004. A comparative statement in this regard is placed at Annexure-I. These rates will apply upto 31.3.2005. There is no change in Security deposit of the existing subscribers.

(b) Registration fees, Telephone call charges and Telephone rent in rural areas of the country have not been hiked. Therefore, the question to reconsider and reduce these charges does not arise.

(c) & (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

(e) Number of measures have been taken by Government/BSNL in phased manner to improve the services in Rural areas. The details are as per Annexure-II.

ANNEXURE-I

COMPARISON OF SECURITY DEPOSIT

	Security Deposit up to 16.5.2004			Security Deposit from 17.5.2004			
	Rural		Urban	Both for Rural & Urban			
Exchange Capacity	Rental Per Month	Security Deposit	Rental Per Month	Security Deposit	Local + 95	Local + STD	Local+STD +ISD
<1000 Lines	50	600	120	1440	1000	2000	3000
1000 Lines <30000 Lines	110	1320	120	1440	1000	2000	3000
30000 Lines <100000 Lines	150	1800	180	2160	1000	2000	3000
100000 Lines & above	210	2520	250	3000	1000	2000	3000

Salient Features of revised Security Deposit

1. No additional Security deposit is recoverable from the existing subscribers.

2. Revision applies only to new connections taken during 17.5.2004 to 31.3.2005.

3. The Security deposit of Rs. 1000/- is prescribed for making local calls & all calls on 95 level covering whole circle/state.

4. Majority of rural subscribers are not required to pay the security deposit of Rs. 2000/- or Rs. 3000/- valid for STD & ISD calls.

ANNEXURE-II

THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT/BSNL IN PHASED MANNER TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS:-

(a) STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT:

(i) It has been planned for umbrella coverage of Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) by Wireless Local Loop (WLL) technology.

(ii) It has been planned to provide Satellite Based Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in remote inaccessible and hilly areas of the country.

(iii) It has been planned to open New Telephone Exchange where the registered demand is more than 75 in a radius of 2.5 Kms.

(iv) It has been planned to extend coverage of the existing telephone exchanges in rural areas up to a radius of 5 Kms.

(v) Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund has made a further plan to provide Rural community Phones (RCPs) in villages, having population more than 2000.

(vi) The Government is committed to provide access to all people for Basic Telecom Services at affordable and reasonable prices.

(vii) The Government seeks to achieve the objective to provide voice and low speech data services.

(viii) All Multi Access Radio Relay System (MARRS) VPTs have been planned to be replaced by reliable technology.

(ix) All 256 Port Exchanges are to be converted into Single Based Module (SBM).

(x) The present SBM Exchanges will be converted into Remote Switching Units (RSUs).

(xi) The budgetary provisions of Rs. 300 crore and Rs. 200 crore allocated to USO fund for the financial year 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively have been disbursed.

(xii) In addition, Rs. 1200 crore allotted for the current financial year 2004-2005 have been disbursed.

(xiii) There are as on date 66,822 villages without Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the country, excluding villages which are depopulated, naxalite/insurgency infested, having population of less than hundred persons and those lying in deep forest areas. The

work of provision of VPTs in these remaining villages on satellite media or otherwise have been awarded to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) by the office of administrator Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund. The work is targeted to be completed within three years in phased manner i.e. by November, 2007.

(xiv) BSNL has finalised tender for Satellite based VPTs as well a s WLL equipment in order to cover all the villages. Advance purchase orders have been released by BSNL for supply of Satellite based Village Public Telephones as well as for WLL equipment in order to cover the most of the villages in hill states, with subsidy from USO Fund.

(b) STEPS TAKEN BY BSNL:-

(i) Connecting all exchanges on reliable digital media.

(ii) Replacement of Under ground paper core cables by other systems in phased manner.

(iii) Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) based centralised fault booking at Short Distance Charging Centre (SDCC).

(iv) Monitoring performance of telephone exchanges/media on daily basis.

(v) Conversion of C-DOT 256 port exchanges in to AN-RAXs (Access Network-Rural Automatic Exchanges).

(vi) Provision of maintenance free battery sets and Engine Alternators for back up power supplies.

(vii) Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) entered for WLL equipments working in rural areas including Fixed Wireless Telephones (FWTs) and provision of AMC in new supplies.

(viii) Provision of high capacity external maintenance free battery with FWT for providing larger talk time and standby time.

(ix) Battery charger of FWT to operate in the voltage range of 90-300 V.